



MICHIGAN HEALTH & HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

Advocating for hospitals and the patients they serve.

TO: Members of the House Health Policy Committee

FROM: Chris Mitchell, Manager, Government Relations

DATE: May 18, 2010

SUBJECT: House Bill 5684 – Licensure for Genetic Counselors
MHA Position: **SUPPORT**

The Michigan Health & Hospital Association (MHA) supports House Bill (HB) 5684 sponsored by Representative Marie Donigan (D-Royal Oak). This bill would create a Board of Genetic Counseling within the Department of Community Health and require any individual engaging in the practice of genetic counseling to be licensed beginning January 2012.

Genetic counseling is a growing industry within health care and currently does not have any state regulation on those who can practice in the profession. Genetic Counselors are specialized health professionals who are highly-trained and required to comply with rigorous standards prior to practicing. These uniquely trained individuals have a master's level education and are certified by the American Board of Genetic Counselors. Their profession should be recognized and regulated by the state to preserve the high quality care they provide. Many hospitals throughout the state utilize genetic counselors in the health care setting to help patients understand and adapt to the medical, psychological and familial implications of genetic contributions to disease. In addition, genetic counselors are tasked with interpreting medical and family histories, calculating the risk of occurrence or recurrence of a genetic condition, imparting clear, accurate and comprehensive information regarding medical conditions and providing psychosocial support to individuals and families coping with a genetic condition.

As of January 2010, 11 states have passed legislation that licenses genetic counselors including Illinois and Indiana within the Great Lakes region. Michigan is one of two states which require informed consent prior to genetic testing (Public Act 29 of 2000). **The MHA believes that passage of HB 5684 is critical to keep Michigan at the forefront of regulating the practice of genetics to protect the quality of health care Michigan residents receive. We urge you to support the licensure of genetic counselors by voting for HB 5684.**

Please contact Chris Mitchell (cmitchell@mha.org) at (517) 703-8622 at the MHA if you have further questions on this issue.

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